

# Underground metro stns to get mobile services in 2 mths

## By June, All Except BSNL Networks Will Be Available

TIMES NEWS NETWORK



**STAYING CONNECTED:** A passenger using the landline facility provided by CMRL at an underground station

**Chennai:** In less than two months, metro rail commuters will be able to use mobile phones across the underground corridors spread over 24km.

Chennai Metro Rail Ltd (CMRL) officials said Vodafone customers will get connectivity across all 19 underground metro stations and on trains, before April first week. At present, Jio and Airtel services are available from Thirumangalam to Egmore and from Little Mount to AG-DMS at stations and in tunnels.

“By June, all mobile networks except BSNL will be

available across all underground metro stations including those opened last month,” a CMRL official said. “BSNL is not cooperating with us to provide services,” he said.

For nearly a year after the first underground section from Nehru Park to Thirumangalam opened in May 2017, commuters had been unable to use smartphones.

Even months after CMRL selected a private firm to install boosters at stations and in tunnels to facilitate mobi-

le phone signals, there was no network coverage at underground stations. CMRL sources said the refusal of mobile phone service providers to sign a contract and pay for linking their networks to the boosters installed by the CMRL contractor was causing the delay. “Some providers had outsourced maintenance of their towers and were not ready to pay and sign another agreement with the CMRL contractor,” said an official in the know.

With the 45km phase-1

now completely operational and ridership inching towards one lakh a day, service providers are showing interest following discussions with CMRL.

Currently, with a majority of commuters unable to use mobiles on the underground section, CMRL has installed landline instruments at all stations for people to make local calls for free. The phones will be available for use at customer care counters at the ticketing level.

There are also two passenger emergency telephones on platforms across all stations for commuters to call up CMRL staff in case of an emergency. These phones are programmed to dial the station control room automatically when a commuter lifts the receiver. The call is automatically redirected to the operation control centre at CMRL’s headquarters at Koyambedu in case the station controller is not available to answer the call.